SPECIAL SECTION

Writing a scientific publication for a management journal

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Abstract

Purpose – The aim of this paper is to stimulate debate about criteria for assessing the scientific contribution of a piece of management research and to guide and encourage researchers in writing papers for publication. The paper also seeks to reduce the number of papers submitted to journals and reviewers which are really unfinished early drafts or which do provide knowledge which could contribute to reducing suffering.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper draws on and discusses the difference between practical research for a manager and scientific research, as well as the author's experience as researcher, writer, reviewer, editor, research methods course leader and director of research.

Findings – The discussion highlights that the author should draft the paper under the suggested headings and fulfil criteria of validity, reliability, supported conclusions, generalisability, ensuring that each section follows on from the other, and that the findings are related to previous research.

Research limitations/implications – This is the author's personal view about how to carry out and write research to get published, without discussions of other views.

Practical implications – The findings in this paper may provoke more debate about management science and the role of this journal. The guidance may help many researchers publish their management research.

Originality/value – The paper links practical guidance with discussion of criteria for scientific contribution in a readable way.

Keywords Research methods, Management science, Publications

Paper type Viewpoint

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to:

- encourage researchers to use data and ideas they already have to in order to prepare a publication;
- give guidance about to how to structure a paper and get it published; and
- raise debate in the journal about the essential ingredients for management research to be considered both scientific and practically useful.

It is a personal and informal paper by a management researcher in the later stages of his career, with experience of reviewing many poor papers for publication as a reviewer and editor and with experience of publishing papers in many types of journals. A number of other researchers and reviewers may well disagree with the guidance here. However, it has been found useful by researchers taking part in courses and they have reported that it helped them publish. It certainly does not represent guidance by the editors for this journal or any other reviewers.

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In the academic field research is judged in terms of whether it is published, and the status of the journal in which it is published. The number and quality of a researchers' or a research units' publications decides appointments, promotion, whether research grants are awarded and the power of a unit within an academic organisation. For better or worse, increasing productivity and quality of publishing is the key to success for individuals and unit.

Most data and ideas are not published, often for good reasons. However, most researchers and research units have data and ideas, which could be published but which lie unused because of lack of time and know-how about how and where to publish. Working on these data and ideas develops skills to do better research in the future. Writing is thinking. Publishing is presenting the final organised version of your thinking.

Structuring the material for presentation in a paper and getting peer reviews is a powerful way to learn how to do better research next time. "If only we had done the research in a different way it would be so much more publishable!" is unfortunately an all-to-common reflection afterwards. As director of research and course leader my role is to ensure there is a good plan for the research before committing more time and money. I need to know "what is the title of the paper which comes from this research, and in which journal will it be published". I also need to know "how will the knowledge produced contribute to reducing suffering?" (the practical value).

This paper does not address the question of making time to write for publication. "No time" is for many reasons: researchers do not know how best to write the paper, or do not have the motivation, or fear confronting their limitations. They may not know a suitable journal, or may feel it may be a waste of time because no one will publish it, or do not realise how important publishing is. The answer to all of these is that it is better to address "the publication issue" sooner rather than later – better to know whether you have what it takes to be a researcher and want your career in this field than to discover this years later.

Example

You carried out a project for your organisation to find out how effective quality improvement activities had been over the last five years. The aim was to get an overview and learn the lessons so as to help formulate a future programme. You collected various data about how many projects and the results of the projects. You interviewed 21 personnel about their involvement and views about the value of the activities. You did a report to management.

Is there a publishable paper here, and how could you write it to get it published in a scientific journal?

Does the material meet basic scientific requirements?

A first step is to consider your data and/or ideas and ask whether they meet some basic requirements for scientific publication. These are:

- Are the methods for gathering data valid for investigating the study concept or question? (This also applies for a method for a review of already-published research.) This is whether the method will give data about the study concept or study question or data about something else.
- Are the data gathered reliably and systematically, following a defined method? This is whether another researcher following the same method would gather the same data. Could they reproduce the study from the description?

- Are the methods for analysis valid for answering the study question and systematically and correctly applied?
- Do the conclusions follow from the findings and are all conclusions supported by data and or justified?
- Are the findings generalisable beyond the one site, case or situation?
- Does the study relate the findings to previously published research and show that it either fills a "important" gap in empirical knowledge, provides conflicting or supporting evidence, or tests a theory?

If all the above are met, then the study makes a scientific contribution. But the contribution is only "significant" scientifically, if the answer is yes to this question:

- Does the study provide an explanation, understanding or prediction which is valid? (This question is related to the generalisablity question.)

This is a tough set of requirements to meet, and the question when starting to write may be "Could the materials be developed to meet these requirements?"

If the answer is "More or less, but I am not sure how well it meets these requirements" then it is certainly worth going onto the next steps towards publishing, and using your doubts to decide what to say in the discussion section about the limitations of the research.

If the collected data are not valid for the question, perhaps the data can answer another question, which is important. Sometimes data validity is poor because the sample was poor for some reason (e.g. biased or too small). One question is whether more data collection is possible and would give data needed for a worthwhile publication, without repeating the whole study? Sometimes a more extensive analysis of respondents compared to the full population can help better to assess bias or to decide how best to do supplementary data collection.

If the answer is a clear "no", it does not rule out the paper for publication. Some journals are largely for practitioners (clinicians or managers). These will publish papers which do not meet such high demands for methods rigour (e.g. "small" sample, or a simple "before-after" study), or will publish papers which do not give explanation or prediction. More later on choosing the right journal.

The answer may be "no" because you have no or little empirical data but that you have an idea or a view about concepts. Most journals interpret their mission to publish "original research" as providing new and significant empirical findings, as well as meeting other criteria for originality. Conceptual or ideas papers are often more difficult to publish, although many journals have special sections for "commentary papers" or "debate" papers. The answer is to find a journal, which might publish what you have to say. Note the structure and style to these types of papers, and then use writing to clarify and focus your ideas and relate them to what has already been published, or show that there is little published and why this is an important topic, idea, or point. Think about how the example study above of quality activities in one organisation meets these requirements and what would be needed to make the study meet these requirements.

One definition of what is scientific is "what is published in scientifically refereed journals". However, my experience is that reviewers often disagree and the guidance given to scientific referees by different health management journals varies considerably from very specific and scientifically rigorous to allowing the reviewer to decide using their own criteria.

Writing the paper

Step 1: overview

One way to start is to make an electronic file (or a handwritten note) with the main headings of the paper. Then write a few words under each heading and move on to the next heading. Do not spend longer than ten minutes on one heading because more important at this stage is how the items under each heading relate to each other and finding out which of the many themes or points is the main one to focus on. Keep moving back and forth between the headings to see if there is one theme, which could run from beginning to the end. Here are headings for two types of paper for doing this first quick draft:

(1) For a study involving empirical data:
- Title;
- Abstract;
- Introduction;
- Previous research;
- Methods and design for data collection and analysis (details in the Appendix);
- Presentation of findings (details in the Appendix);
- Discussion (last section of this is, limitations of the research);
- Conclusion;
- References; and
- Appendices.

(2) For a conceptual paper:
- Title;
- Abstract;
- Introduction: first statement of the problem/question. Why it is important – what difference it would make if we had a better way to … etc.;
- Previous research (and strengths and limitations);
- Proposed new idea/approach/key point. Explanation. What this contributes and what difference it would make;
- Discussion: limitations of this idea. Proposals for future research or debate on the subject;
- Conclusion; and
- References.

Different types of paper may need a different type of structure. *The Journal of Health Organisation and Management* lists these: Research paper, Viewpoint, Technical paper, Conceptual paper, Case study, Literature review, General review.

Reviewers sometimes find themselves reviewing what are really first drafts, where the person has virtually written down everything they can think of on the topic, but there is no logical linking between the parts and many different questions and subjects are touched upon. Usually you have to decide which is the main theme to concentrate on, and put the

first draft to one side to go back to later, if needed. Then cut all the material, which does not relate to the main theme and central question and see what the paper looks like.

How do you decide the main theme or central question? By choosing your "strongest" data (valid, reliable, suitable sample, and connected with an important question) – everything before and after you present your data must relate to the data you will present. Making the overview using the headings suggested helps you to ensure that the paper does these two most important things:

(1) *Vertical linking*: what is written under each heading of the paper should follow-on from the one before and link to the next heading. It is this which shows how the research question follows from the review of previous research and leads into the methods for collecting data to answer the question, the findings and analysis presentation (to answer the question), and the discussion and conclusions.

(2) *Horizontal linking*: how the research relates to previous and future research. The "previous research" section should review the most relevant studies on the subject. Then the later the "discussion" section should show how the findings are similar or different to others, or tests theories or fills gaps.

Step 2: decide structure and style for chosen journal

Making this overview draft focuses your paper and shows you if you have something publishable. The second step is to decide whether to keep this general structure or use a different one, which is used in or recommended by the journal you are aiming for. This step also involves understanding and using the style you need for the journal. "Style" is a combination of these things:

Detail of explanation. Journals differ in the level of knowledge they assume of their readers about different subjects. Some assume little knowledge. Some do not want detail, but want references for the reader to follow up if they want to know more. You need to know the readers and the items you need to give details about and which items you can assume they know. For example, it is often necessary to describe aspects of the health system or setting in an international journal when readers in other countries are not familiar with the context for or nature of what you studied. It is always easier to add detail than to try to work out which detail to cut: assume an intelligent reader and avoid detail in the early drafts for everything but the methods, limitations and implications sections.

Conciseness. Conciseness is giving only the detail required but also using sentences and phrasing with the fewest words and using active words. Good examples of concise style are paper in *The British Medical Journal*, and *The Economist*. Other journals are more forgiving of repetition and allow longer papers. Generally a first draft can be up to 10,000 words, but a publishable paper is usually 2,000-6,000 words in most journals. Journals vary in the number of references they allow and want. The background and review of previous research should not take up more than 25 per cent of the paper.

Objectivity. All scientific journals require a scientific style, where you as an author are dispassionately reporting what you have observed and are open minded about whether the observations and conclusions are correct – this applies to a conceptual as well as to an empirical article. Never use "I", be careful about using "very", "much" or emphasis unless it is really justified and follows after you have presented the evidence. Reviewers are allergic to any paper which gives even the slightest suggestion that the

writer has a crusade or even an opinion, and is just using the data to get their cause into print. Objectivity also includes an honest discussion of the limitations and alternative explanations for the findings. However, journals do vary in how rigorously objective a style they require.

Step 3: fill in the headings

Having decided the best headings and style for the paper the next step is to start filling in the details under each heading. Aim for one page per heading, but two for findings and discussion. Put details in an appendix and add them later to the body of the text if you need to. At this stage do not take time filling in references but use parentheses to note a reference: e.g. (Davis *et al.*) or that you will need a reference to give more details or to substantiate your point – mark these ( ) so you can fill them in later.

If you have not already done a review of previous research you need to do this earlier rather than later. The section after the introduction presents previous research and leads into your study objectives or questions. Your discussion section later shows how your study is similar and different to what has been reported. Your review will help you decide what your study contributes to what is already known: typically new empirical data where there was none, or data which supports, disproves or questions what was previously thought. Looking at previous studies helps you decide what the main focus and question of your paper should be, and also which journals to aim for. It also helps you see the style and structure used for this subject before. Journals differ in how much of a review they want – set a time and words limit for this and add to it later: in the publication draft aim for no more than 700 words covering six to eight of the papers or books with the theories and research which are most relevant to your data.

Presenting the findings concisely, but giving the reader enough detail to assess if the conclusions do follow from the findings is always a challenge. It is particularly difficult to present qualitative data. Often qualitative papers present the "findings" as an analysis of the data at a high level of abstraction. It is most important to present data showing how the analysis has moved from "raw data" to the next level of category grouping and then on to the next level – not just to describe this process in the methods section and expect the reader to assume you followed the method and then only present conclusions. At least some quotes are needed to show both the range of extremes and the typical responses.

Use examples and illustrations to explain and make things clear, especially when you give abstract concepts. This also keeps the paper interesting, helps people see the relevance, and tests whether you are saying anything useful. When to write the abstract? Some do it last of all. But doing it right at the beginning, during early drafting, helps to see how it could all fit together and to discover the main theme or focus.

Step 4: revising

A paper should go through many draft versions, at least three or four, before you ask a colleague to give comments. Always leave a week after working on a paper before doing a redraft. The more time you leave after drafting before doing a revision, the more you can see the paper as if someone else wrote it and the less determined you will be to keep ideas which seem precious to you but not to anyone else (or which you have not made clear).

Getting another person's comments is essential to writing a paper. Ask them to tell you directly and clearly what is good and what needs to be changed and do not be

defensive. Do not argue with them – just listen, write it down and reflect on what they say.

Revising is of two types: the first is to get the theme clear and the vertical linking so that each part follows from the last and leads into the next. This involves ruthlessly cutting out side-stories or items, which do not clearly contribute to the main theme/question. Less is more and anything, which does not clearly contribute actually damages the paper. Unlike TV drama, a series of parallel stories do not add to the interest of the paper. The second type is polishing by cutting out repetitions and shortening lengthy sentences or those with more than one idea in them. Use the seven scientific requirements questions above to decide what you need to change and/or add each time you revise.

Step 5: submitting the paper

You are ready to submit when the paper is as short as you can get it, with one clear single theme and question running from beginning to the end, and as many of the above scientific requirements as possible have been met. At an early stage you should have made your list of target journals: decide which to submit to and have a "plan B" (and C) ready: expect the journal to either reject outright or require revisions. Your "plan B" is which journal then to submit to if rejected or if revisions are too demanding or impossible to meet. The review can take anything from two to six months before you hear. Reviewers usually demand adding a number of items, as well as shortening the paper!

Finding a journal and meeting journal requirements

You may already have decided which journal to aim for at an early stage. Even if you have, the work of reviewing previous research will take you to other journals which might publish your paper – your "plan B". You need to know the preferences of different journals for papers in terms of: subject area, methods bias, and degree of scientific rigour demanded. Some journals are happy to publish small sample qualitative studies, and these journals vary in the level of scientific rigour and evidence presentation they demand of a qualitative study.

As well as varying along a spectrum from "low scientific demand" to "rigorous scientific demands" (and high status), journals also vary from "practitioner only" to "researcher/academic only". Some journals, which have mostly practitioner readership also have rigorous scientific demands, such as some clinical journals (e.g. *British Medical Journal*, and *Quality and Safety in Health Care*). Some journals which are largely for practitioners (clinicians or managers) often publish papers which do not meet such high methods rigour (e.g. small sample, simple before after study) or which do not give explanation or prediction. Journals' demands do change over time.

Get a feel for the style and type of paper the journal tends to publish by looking at a few editions. But also go through the "guidance to authors" section in the Journal and follow these requirements closely.

Conclusions

This personal paper by an experienced researcher and reviewer gave guidance for writing a research publication. It considered what makes a study and a research paper scientific in the management field and is intended to raise debate in the journal about both publication and scientific criteria in management studies in health care. Many of

the points made by the paper can be summarised by noting some of the most common reasons why papers are rejected for publication:

- over 6,000 words or not meeting the journal word limit;
- not focusing the paper on one limited subject or question – trying to cover too wide an area or different subjects so that the reader gets confused about the main point or subject;
- no clear linking between problem, research reviewed, research question, methods and design, findings, discussion and conclusion: irrelevant material or new ideas introduced not related to the single theme;
- poor linking to previous research, important previous research missing;
- repetition, or too-much detail, or too-little detail typically about data collection methods, findings, and background;
- limitations or alternative explanations not discussed sufficiently;
- title, abstract or conclusion does not describe what was presented; and
- referencing method not followed consistently to cite other research.

The final advice is: do not give up – the more you revise and the more reviews you get, the more you learn and develop as a researcher. My first published scientific paper went through 34 drafts and 11 submissions. It taught me a few things. (See Appendices 1-4.)

Appendix 1. Useful references on scientific publishing

Hall, G. (1994), *How to Write a Paper*, BMJ Publishing Group, London
Moxley, J. (1992), *Publish Don't Perish*, Greenwood Press, London
Peters, R.L. (1997), *Getting What You Came for: The Smart Student's Guide to Earning a Master's or PHD*, The Noonday Press, New York, NY.
Writing a Literature Review (n.d.), available at: www.depts.washington.edu.psywc/handouts.shtml

Appendix 2. Other notes on publishing your work

General comments:

- *Conditions and skills needed to do research*. Practitioners are not researchers. Researchers contribute to the discipline, and not directly to usable knowledge for better practice. Few want to do both, have the skills to do both, or are in organisations, which create the conditions to do both at the same time (or one after the other).
- *Ways of knowing and evidence*. Evidence is not only findings from experimental research: It includes experience, individual knowledge, documented learning, collective learning, and other types of research. More systematic documentation and evaluation as part of a practical project could produce good enough data for a scientific article. But this needs time and a method to allow the data collection as part of the project.
- *What is the primary knowledge base you are drawing on and contributing to?* Do you know this literature? Can others help you overview and guidance to the many different sources where knowledge is published on this subject and to which you can relate your work?

General point: for scientific publication: your work has to contribute to a body of knowledge, and one which is normally covered by the journal you are targeting.

However, a medical journal will accept a publication, which points to a non-medical body of knowledge, which has important implications for medical science and practice.

Criteria/what you need to do
The basics to get clear are: the types of article, typical article headings, style of writing and journal guidance for boxes, references, spacing, etc.

The paper should be about a scientifically or practically important problem or issue: will the knowledge contribute to reducing suffering, and if so, how.

Of interest to readers
Scientific:

- links to other research;
- defined question/hypothesis;
- for the question/hypothesis it uses accepted data gathering and analysis methods and design;
- methods described and appear to be used in proper way;
- findings presented in a way which allows independent assessment;
- discussion relates findings to others research or lack of it;
- self critical listing of limitations; and
- conclusions follow from the findings.

Logical linking structure from first section through to end.

Some want practical implications or even recommendations spelt out (so what? what difference would this make?).

Tips
Get to know the type of articles they publish and how difficult to get accepted.

Have an A and B status list.

Use examples and illustrations. Define terms.

Expect rejection, but the reviewers comments will be very helpful.

Offer to do reviews yourself.

Write headings, decide length of each, then fill in. Put aside for at least a week then draft again.

Appendix 3. Some checklists for reviewers supplied by different journals
The most detailed first. Note the variation in amount of guidance and how specific it is.

(1) International Journal of Integrated Care
Notes to reviewers
The manuscript is a confidential document. Please do not discuss this even with the author.

Authors should not contact you directly; we will continue to ask them to direct any queries through us. We ask reviewers to declare any competing interest that might relate to papers considered by the IJIC.

As reviewer you will be advising the editors, who make the final decision. We will let you know our decision by email. We will pass on your report to the author; please do not make any comments that you do not wish the author to see. Even if we do not accept a paper we would like to pass on constructive comments that might help the author to improve it.

Please give detailed comments (with references, whenever possible) that will help both the editors to make a decision on the paper and the authors to improve it.

There will be occasions when papers do not conform to some of the criteria but which, none the less, make a significant contribution to the domain. Please use your judgement in applying the criteria.

General questions

1. Originality: does the paper add enough to what is already in the published literature? If not, please cite relevant references.

2. Importance of the work to our readers:

2a. Does the paper matter to readers who are in any way involved in the study, the development or the execution of integrated care?

2b. Is the article clearly written, accurate and, given its likely readership, is the terminology adequately explained?

Scientific reliability:

3a. Is the research question clearly defined and appropriately answered?

3b. Is the overall design of the study adequate?

3c. Are the participants studied and their situations adequately described?

3d. Are the research methods adequately described?

3e. Are the results credible and well presented?

3f. Are the interpretation and conclusions warranted by and sufficiently derived from/focused on the data? Is the message clear?

3g. Is adequate credit given to the work of others in the field? Are the references up to date, sufficiently comprehensive and relevant? Are there any glaring omissions?

3h. Do the title, abstract and key words reflect accurately what the paper says?

4. Are there any changes you would recommend are made to the article?

5. Is the article suitable for publication in IJIC in its current or revised form?

Other comments by the reviewer.

General statistical checklist

1. Design features:

1a. Is the objective of the study sufficiently described?

1b. Is an appropriate study design used to achieve the objective?

1c. Is there a satisfactory statement given of source of subjects?

1d. Is a pre-study calculation of required sample size reported?

2a. Is a satisfactory response rate achieved?

3. Analysis and presentation:

3a. Is there a statement adequately describing or referencing all statistical procedures used?

3b. Are the statistical analyses used appropriate?

3c. Is the presentation of statistical material satisfactory?

3d. Are the confidence intervals given for the main results?

3e. Is the conclusion drawn from the statistical analysis justified?

4. Recommendation on paper:

4a. Is the paper of acceptable statistical standard for publication?

4b. If "No" to question 4a, could it become acceptable with suitable revision?

Statisticians' checklist for randomised controlled trials

These trials must conform to the CONSORT statement and the following checklist:

1. Design features:

1a. Is the objective of the trial sufficiently described?

1b. Is the statement of diagnostic criteria for entry to the trial satisfactory?

1c. Is the statement of the source of participants satisfactory?

1d. Are concurrent (not historical) controls used?

1e. Are interventions well defined?

1f. Is random allocation to the intervention used?

1g. Is the method of randomisation described?

1h. Is the delay from the allocation to the start of the intervention acceptably short?

1i. What is the potential degree of blindness used?

1j. Is the statement f the criteria for the outcome measures satisfactory?

1k. Are the outcome measures appropriate?

1l. Is a pre-study calculation of sample size reported?

1m. Is the duration of post-intervention follow up stated?

2. Conduct of trial:

2a. Are the intervention and control groups comparable in relevant measures?

2b. Has a high proportion of participants followed up?

2c. Has a high proportion of participants completed the intervention?

2d. Are the participants who dropped out from the intervention and control groups described adequately?

2e. Are adverse effects of the intervention reported?

3. Analysis and presentation:

3a. Are all statistical procedures adequately described or referenced?

3b. Are the statistical analyses appropriate?

3d. Are prognostic factors adequately considered?

3e. Is the presentation of statistical material satisfactory?

3f. Are confidence intervals given for the main results?

3g. Are the conclusions drawn from the statistical analysis justified?

4. Recommendation on paper

4a. Is the paper of acceptable statistical standard for publication?

4b. If "No" to question 4a, could it become acceptable?

Qualitative research checklist

- Was the research question clearly defined?
- Overall, did the researcher make explicit in the account the theoretical framework and methods used at every stage or the research?
- Was the context clearly described?
- Was the sampling strategy/selection of cases clearly described and justified?
- If appropriate, was the sampling strategy theoretically comprehensive to ensure the generalisability of the conceptual analysis (diverse range of individuals and settings, for example)?
- How was the fieldwork undertaken? Was it described in detail?
- Could the evidence (fieldwork notes, interview transcripts, recordings, documentary analysis, etc.) could be inspected independently by others: if relevant, could the process of transcription be independently inspected?
- Were the procedures for data analysis clearly described and theoretically justified? Did they relate to the original research questions? How were themes and concepts identified from the data?
- Was the analysis repeated by more than one researcher to ensure reliability?
- Did the investigator make use of quantitative evidence to test qualitative conclusions where appropriate?
- Did the investigator give evidence of seeking out observations that might have contradicted or modified the analysis?
- Was sufficient of the original evidence presented systematically in the written account to satisfy the skeptical reader of the relation between the interpretation and the evidence (for example, were quotations numbered and sources given?

(2) Evaluation: The International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice
Guidance for referees
Please answer the following questions:

1. Should this paper be published?

Yes Without changes _____ With changes _____

(Please note suggestions below)

No _____

2. Does it merit publication after more serious re-writing?
3. Does it make a contribution to the field?
4. Is it well argued?
5. Is the article well expressed?
6. Does it appear that English is not the author(s)'s first language? Does the author(s)'s use of English require particular attention?
7. General comments to author.

(3) Health Policy
Referee's evaluation sheet
Rating: please rate the following aspects of the manuscript by checking as appropriate

	Good	Average	Poor
Originality of the work?			
Overall quality of the manuscript:			

- Relevance of the topic.
- Appropriateness of the methodology.

Are the conclusions following from the data?
Is the paper easy to follow?
Are the references adequate?
English and presentation?
Are conclusions-recommendations for health policy incorporated?
Recommendation: Please check as appropriate:

- Accept without change.
- Accept with *Minor* revision.
- *Major* revision is requested.
- Reject.

(4) Journal of Health Organization and Management
May 2005 criteria
"We haven't included any pro forma for reviews, but when undertaking your review could you please take into account the following:

- knowledge of the relevant literature;
- if based on empirical research, quality of the research methods and relevance to the topic;
- quality of findings, including new knowledge added to the field, relevance to a readership of an academic journal on health, its organisation and management (broadly defined); and
- quality of writing style.

Could you please advise whether the paper is:

- publishable as it stands;
- publishable with some minor amendments (and if so, which amendments);
- publishable with major amendments/rewrite (and if so, what is needed); and
- not suitable for publishing.

We will send reviewers' comments to the authors of the paper, and leave it to the reviewers to decide whether or not they wish to remain anonymous. We will also send each reviewers a copy of the each other's report."

Previous criteria

(1) 1. Content
   - Scientific/technical accuracy
   - Relevance and appropriateness for the *Journal of Management in Medicine*

(2) 2. Style
   - Clarity
   - Use of language
   - Appropriateness of style for the *Journal of Management in Medicine*

(3) 3. Practical application
   - Usefulness of paper to health managers

(4) 4. Proposed changes

(5) 5. Comments for authors
   - Summary of comments
   - Accept without change
   - Accept with change
   - Reject.

(5) Quality and Safety in Health Care

(1) Originality;

(2) Importance;

(3) Contribution to quality;

(4) Scientific reliability
   - Design
   - Patients/subjects studied
   - Results
   - Interpretation and discussion
   - References;
   - Contribution;
   - Suitability; and
   - Other points.

(6) International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance

Aim: *The International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance* provides a forum for the international exchange of theoretical and practical aspects of quality assurance and management in health care; to develop knowledge about quality assurance theory and practice, total quality management and best practice within health care organizations. Articles may be theoretical, based on practical experience, provide stimulus for debate, a case study, or report experimental results.

Criteria for publication:

- Competent scholarship.
- Contribution to the theoretical.
- Conceptual and/or empirical foundations of quality in health care.
- Both academics and practitioners should find the work valuable.
- Originality and significance to some aspect of health care provision.
- Readable and credible.

Key points: We do not expect a written report from you but it would help us if you used Word's Track Changes to annotate the manuscript (click: "Tools"; "Track changes"; "Highlight changes"; "Track changes while editing"). If you do not want the author to see the annotator's identify then click "Tools"; "Options"; "User information" and blank your name or use a nickname.

The format, such as referencing, has been checked or will be checked later but you are welcome to comment. If you can suggest improvements to the article's grammar, syntax, punctuation and other presentation features then that would be appreciated.

Your thoughts on the relevance and scholarly style would be especially welcome.

Bear in mind the international audience.

For empirical papers we attach equal importance to all phases of the research process: (introduction, background and context; literature review; problem statement; design, sampling, data collection; data analysis; findings, conclusions and recommendations).

We expect the literature review to be reasonably comprehensive and up-to-date.

If you finally decide the manuscript is not publishable then please make your recommendation in a covering e-mail rather than an annotation on the article.

(7) The Milbank Quarterly

- Manuscript rating: (A, B, C, D).
- Original:
- Accuracy:
- Presentation:
- Interest:
- Confidential comments.
- Suggestions to the author.

Please do NOT indicate to the author your confidential recommendation to the editor.

(8) Clinical Governance: An International Journal

Criteria for publication:

- Competent scholarship.
- Contribution to theoretical, conceptual and/or empirical foundations of quality in health care.
- That academics and/or practitioners would find the work of value (value is determined by originality and significance to some aspect of health care provision.
- Readability.
- Must be credible.

Note to reviewers: when papers do not conform to some of these criteria but which, nonetheless, make a significant contribution to the domain, please use your judgement in applying the criteria.

Comments:

- Is the content of the article within the editorial aims and scope of the journal? Yes No?
- Does the title reflect the content?
- Demonstrates originality of practice?
- Demonstrates originality of application?
- Original case study?
- Makes a significant contribution to knowledge?
- Is a useful illustration of "good practice"?
- Provides a view that stimulates debate?
- Is the article clearly written?
- Is the article accurate?
- Given the readership is the terminology adequately explained?
- Is adequate credit given to the work of others in the field?
- Are the references sufficiently comprehensive?
- Are the summary and conclusions adequate?
- Is the arranging and sequencing of material suitable?
- Are any portions of the paper, tables or figures unnecessary?

Evaluation: Publishable without revision, with minor revisions (please comment), with major revisions (please comment), not publishable (please comment).

(9) International Journal for Quality in Health Care (ISQUA)

- Does the paper fall within the scope of a general interest quality assurance journal?
- Is this a new and original contribution?
- Is the title suitable and well worded?
- Is the abstract clearly written and free of abbreviations?
- Are the keywords concise and appropriate to the material?
- Are the methods sound and adequately described?
- Are the concepts appropriately defined and used?
- Is the statistical treatment adequate?
- Are the points of interpretation clearly separated from the results?
- Are the conclusions and interpretations sound and justified by the data?
- Are the figures adequate?
- Are the tables adequate?
- Is the article unnecessarily long?
- Are all the references necessary?
- Is the English acceptable?
- Is the paper addressed to an international audience?

Confidential comments to editor
Note: Please enter here any recommendations to the editor regarding the decision to consider the paper for publication. These comments will not be sent to the author.

Comments to author(s)
Enter below your comments and recommendations to the author(s). Do not put your name in this section unless you wish it to be forwarded to the author(s).

Appendix 4. Types of health management and organisation papers
(From *Journal of Health Organisation* and management guidance for structured abstracts)
Research paper
Papers which report on any type of research undertaken by the author(s), whether the construction or testing of a model or framework, action research, testing of data, market research or surveys, empirical, scientific or clinical research.

Viewpoint
Any paper, where content is dependent on the author's opinion and interpretation, should be included in this category; this also includes journalistic pieces.

Technical paper
Describes and evaluates technical products, processes or services.

Conceptual paper
Papers are not based on research but will develop and test hypotheses. The papers are likely to be discursive and cover philosophical discussions and comparative studies of others' work and thinking.

Case study
Case studies describe actual interventions or experiences within organizations and will not generally report on research. A description of a legal case or a hypothetical case study used as a teaching exercise would also fit into this category.

Literature review
This category should only be used if the main purpose of the paper is to annotate and/or critique the literature in a particular subject area. It may be selective, providing advice on information sources or it may be comprehensive in that the paper's aim is to cover the main contributors to the development of a topic and explore their different views.

General review
Those papers which provide an overview or historical examination of some concept, technique or phenomena. The papers are likely to be more descriptive or instructional ("how to" papers) than discursive.

Writing a structured abstract
There are four fields which are obligatory (Purpose, Design, Findings and Value) and two (Research limitations/implications and Practical implications) may be omitted if they are not applicable. Abstracts should contain no more than 250 words, excluding the sub-headings. No one sub-heading should contain more than 100 words. Write concisely and clearly and only cover what appears in the original paper.

Purpose
In one sentence, write down the main objective in writing this paper / conducting the research.

Design/methodology/approach
How are the objectives achieved? Include the main method(s) used for the research. What is the approach to the topic and what is the theoretical or subject scope of the paper?

Findings
What was found in the course of the work? This will refer to analysis, discussion, or results. Do not go into detail but do provide tangible findings.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable)
If a research paper, this section must be completed and should include suggestions for future research and any identified limitations in the current research.

Practical implications (if applicable)
What outcomes and implications for practice, applications and consequences are identified? Not all papers will have practical implications but most will. What changes to practice should be made as a result of this research/paper?

Originality/value
What is new in the paper? State the value of the paper and to whom.

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